

Full Length Research Paper

An evaluation of pre-service Turkish teachers' skills and knowledge regarding preparation of worksheets to teaching Turkish to foreigners

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The aim of this study was to evaluate pre-service Turkish teachers' skills and opinions regarding preparation of worksheets to teach Turkish to foreigners. For this purpose, the case study, which is one of the qualitative research methods, was used. A total of 50 Pre-Service Turkish Teachers at Atatürk University were selected as the study group through criterion sampling. The data for the study were collected through worksheets developed by teacher candidates and a semi-structured interview form developed to determine their opinions. The data collected was analyzed using content analysis. As a result of the study, it was determined that although there are some concerns regarding preparation of worksheets by pre-service Turkish teachers for foreigners to teach Turkish, they are at moderate level in general. In addition, it was observed that teacher candidates gained significant experience related to the preparation process of worksheets, gained skills in scientific research process and mostly presented practical learning for foreign students by considering their daily needs.

Key words: Turkish teaching, language teaching, material development, case study and event design.

INTRODUCTION

The number and quality of the materials developed with the spread of teaching Turkish as a foreign language in the country and abroad are increasing day by day. The development of teaching Turkish to foreigners ensures more effective and efficient education as well as contributes to the number of those learning Turkish. However, there are major drawbacks regarding development of these materials compared to materials developed to teach various foreign languages other than Turkish. According to Sülükçü (2011), the materials developed for foreigners to teach Turkish are very limited

and it is necessary to prepare Turkish teaching materials by taking different age groups into account.

Appealing to different senses with the materials in the teaching process will provide permanent behavioral changes and multiple learning opportunities to the students. The use of written, visual and audio materials will make courses more interesting. Furthermore, teachers should know the type of the materials to be used and must be trained for preparation and use of the materials (Duman, 2013). Teachers and pre-service teachers can offer effective teaching by using

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instructional technologies and gaining the related skills, and applying these skills effectively in the classroom (Varank and Ergün, 2005; Alım, 2015).

In addition to effective use of materials by in-service teachers and pre-service teachers, the quality of these materials is also important. Fuller (2001) states that the quality of the materials, different sources and use of visual elements while learning different foreign languages contribute to the learning process significantly. According to Yilmaz and Talas (2015), the materials developed should be selected carefully and serve pre-determined purposes in order to organize the learning environment and attract the attention of students. Learning materials that are carefully selected will also determine the quality of learning.

Teaching materials used in the learning environment are important in terms of retention of learning. Among the learning materials that can be effective are worksheets developed practically and associated with everyday life including thought-provoking questions and enriched with interesting illustrations, graphics and images contribute to a more permanent learning for students (Ormancı and Şaşmaz Ören, 2010). Worksheets are one of the teaching materials used to ensure lasting behavioral changes in individuals (Kaymakçı, 2006).

Worksheets can contribute to students' learning in many ways in addition to facilitating permanent learning. Students should be well monitored, their personal perspectives should be determined and an effective communication should be established with them while organizing activities associated with integrative learning approach. Worksheets should be developed and applied in order to perform these activities (Kurt and Akdeniz, 2002; Entwistle et al., 1997). Students with differences and various abilities learn something at the same time in the teaching environment. Each student should be offered with activities help them to learn more easily in the learning process by taking their individual differences into account. Worksheets can be used to make this happen (Çiftlik, 2011). Worksheets help students to individualize the learning process and manage the learning process.

There are several definitions related to the worksheets. Demircioğlu et al. (2004) define worksheets as "important tools including the process steps guiding students, helping them to make their minds up and facilitating participation of all of them in the learning process at the same time". According to Yigit et al. (2007), "Worksheets are used to lead students to study by themselves and gain a sense of self-confidence to fulfill their responsibilities" (Kaymakçı, 2006). "Worksheets are the teaching materials including instructions to perform some behaviors related to a subject that can be used in and out of the classroom to ensure individual and active learning by applying on students during all educational steps".

The subjects in which students experience difficulties

should be taken into account while preparing the worksheets. These subjects may be introduced as more enjoyable and fun by preparing worksheets about them (Demircioğlu and Atasoy, 2006). These worksheets should include some visual, verbal and contextual features in order to have well-developed worksheets that are appropriate for the particular level of the students (Şaşmaz and Ormanlı, 2012). Well-designed worksheets with these specifications can be used as an effective teaching tool (Dede, 2010).

Worksheets increase students' interest in the course contents with their colorful designs and striking features. Thus, students are motivated to take active roles in the learning process (Elvan, 2012). Well-developed worksheets can help students to manage the process by supporting them to work independently (Tuncer and Altunay, 2010). Worksheets help students learn in an effective way by making them responsible for their own learning. They lead them to meaningful learning instead of literal learning (Bayrak, 2008). In addition to this, worksheets play an important role in the diversification of the environment in the learning and teaching environments, helping teachers' concentrate on the subject and determination of learning status of students (Göçer, 2012).

In literature, there were no studies on the development of the worksheets in teaching Turkish to foreigners. Besides, there are some studies conducted on the impact of worksheets in teaching Turkish as the mother tongue. Göçer (2012) has investigated the opinions of pre-service Turkish teachers regarding worksheets. Tan (2008) has investigated the impact of worksheets on the grammar achievement of 7th grade students and Çiftlik Akçakaya (2011) has investigated the effect of worksheets on elimination of misconceptions regarding grammar education. In addition to teaching Turkish, there are studies relating to the different disciplines of education investigated by Demircioğlu et al. (2014), Özay (2010), Ormanlı and Şaşmaz (2010), Demircioğlu and Kaymakçı (2011), Demircioğlu and Atasoy (2006), Elvan (2012), Şaşmaz and Ormanlı (2012) and Yeşilyurt and Gül'ün (2011). Since there was no study in literature that investigated the worksheets developed to teach Turkish to foreigners and opinions of pre-service teachers regarding the preparation of these worksheets, this study was needed.

The purpose of the study

This study was aimed at evaluating the pre-service Turkish teachers' skills and opinions regarding preparation of worksheets to teach Turkish to foreigners. In the study, the following research questions are tried to be answered:

1. How are the skills of pre-service Turkish teachers

regarding preparation of worksheets to be used to teach Turkish to foreigners?

2. What are the opinions of pre-service Turkish teachers regarding preparation of worksheets to be used to teach Turkish to foreigners?

METHODOLOGY

Information about the research model, study group, data collection and analysis of the data is given.

Research model

In the present study, the case study, which is one of the qualitative research methods, was used. In this study, the detailed investigation of worksheets developed by pre-service Turkish teachers to teach Turkish to foreigners and their opinions regarding preparation of these worksheets reflects the case study, which is one of the qualitative research methods.

Study group

This study was conducted on a total of 50 teacher candidates majoring in Turkish Education at Ataturk University and taking the course "Teaching Turkish to Foreigners" in their fifth semester. Pre-service Turkish teachers were asked to prepare worksheets to be used to teach Turkish to foreigners. After preparing worksheets, their opinions regarding preparation process of these worksheets were also obtained. In the selection of study group, criterion sampling, which is one of the purposive sampling methods, was used. The reason for using the criteria selected sampling is because the study is conducted on pre-service Turkish teachers taking the course "Teaching Turkish to Foreigners".

Data collection

In the study, the data of the study were collected through worksheets developed by pre-service Turkish teachers to see their worksheet preparation skills and semi-structured interview form developed to determine their opinions. Pre-service Turkish teachers taking the course "Teaching Turkish to Foreigners" have seen application examples by receiving theoretical information regarding the worksheets they would prepare in the 10th week of the course. In this way, they were informed about the points to consider, and problems that they may encounter. Teacher candidates were given 2 weeks to answer the questions about themselves and prepare the worksheets. In this period, the participants were consulted and received feedbacks at every stage of the study by the researcher. At the end of this time period, the worksheets developed on the computer were collected. The teacher candidates received feedbacks about the worksheets they had created.

After application of worksheets on pre-service teachers, they were asked to fill in the interview form about the problems they had encountered while preparing these materials, the contribution of this process to them and most importantly the aspects of the study. In the interview forms, their awareness regarding worksheets was determined. In the development process of the interview the relevant documents in the literature were investigated and the items were created accordingly. The items developed were examined by two faculty members who are specialists in the area of teaching Turkish and they expressed their opinions regarding these items.

Some modifications were made on the form in accordance with the expert opinions received. Some items in the form were changed after examining pilot interviews conducted with 5 students. The form was finalized after these modifications. Data diversity using multiple data collection tool has been used to increase the validity of the study.

Data analysis

In this study, the qualitative data analysis methods were used to analyze the data obtained. Although the qualitative analysis of data is considered as a non-objective interpretation by making direct citations from an interview, observation or document, it is rather a complex and systematic process (Ekiz, 2009). In the present study, the content analysis, which is one of the qualitative data analysis methods, was used. "Content analysis includes techniques on different points on a line that lies between objectivity and subjectivity ends. These methods, which have multi-shaped and multifunctional aspects, have a structure that allows researchers to be more creative" (Bilgin, 2014).

Worksheets developed by pre-service Turkish teachers were classified into three levels as advanced, moderate and low levels by analyzing them in terms of form and content of the worksheets. The relevant studies in the literature were reviewed and some studies that investigated the worksheets were used while determining the evaluation criteria. Worksheets were analyzed by another person other than the researcher while they were being investigated. Two raters shared their thoughts with each other and the issues that were not in agreement were excluded from the evaluation, and collective decisions were made.

Codes and categories were created from data obtained in the form of interviews. One more person other than the researcher made coding on the data to ensure the reliability of the codes and categories created. For the comparison of the codes created by encoders, the reliability calculation formula put forward by Miles and Huberman (1994) was used. The inter-researcher agreement rate was found to range between 85 and 89%, respectively. The codes on which there was no agreement were discussed by encoder and an agreement was reached. Some opinions of teacher candidates were given in order to support the codes obtained from interview forms. No changes were made in the expressions of teacher candidates. The reliability of the interview data was also tried to be ensured by these processes made during the data analysis.

RESULTS

In this section, the findings are presented in the tables in accordance with the research questions.

The findings related to the worksheet preparation skills of pre-service Turkish teachers

The distribution of the topics included in the worksheets developed by Pre-Service Turkish Teachers is given in Table 1.

Considering Table 1, the topics included in the worksheets developed by pre-service Turkish teachers are discoveries, grammar, cultural elements, individual differences, daily life, the media, health and nutrition, the world of literature, nature and the animal world, emotions

Table 1. The distribution of the topics included in the worksheets.

The distribution of the topics	f	%
Discoveries	1	2
Grammar	5	10
Cultural elements	12	24
Individual differences	3	6
Daily life	16	32
The media	1	2
Health and nutrition	5	10
The world of literature	2	4
Nature and the animal world	2	4
Emotions and dreams	3	6
Total	50	100

Table 2. The formal qualification of worksheets.

The formal qualification	Level	f	%
The appropriateness of expressions	High	12	24
	Moderately	23	46
	Lower	15	30
Clarity and understandability of the Instructions	High	14	28
	Moderately	22	44
	Lower	14	28
Appropriateness of the page designs	High	10	20
	Moderately	22	44
	Lower	18	36
The use of appropriate visuals	High	23	46
	Moderately	15	30
	Lower	12	24
The use of appropriate font/font size	High	14	28
	Moderately	16	32
	Lower	20	40
Compliance of the audio-visual elements	High	8	16
	Moderately	3	6
	Lower	39	78

and dreams. The most widely discussed topic among all of them is daily life (f: 16). It can be suggested these worksheets are mostly developed to meet daily needs of the students. The formal qualification of worksheets developed by Pre-Service Turkish teachers is given in Table 2.

In Table 2, there are six categories related to formal qualification of worksheets developed by Pre-Service

Turkish Teachers. In the worksheets, the appropriateness of expressions (f: 23), clarity and understandability of the instructions (f: 22), appropriateness of the page designs (f: 22) were found to be moderately sufficient; while the use of appropriate visuals (f: 23) is found to be highly sufficient and font/font size (f: 20) and compliance of the audio-visual elements are found to be adequate in much lower levels. According to these results, the materials

Table 3. Content qualification of the worksheets.

Content competence	Level	f	%
Appropriate length of the pages	High	5	10
	Moderately	25	50
	Lower	20	40
Including different types of questions	High	13	26
	Moderately	19	38
	Lower	18	36
Including appropriate questions	High	9	18
	Moderately	22	44
	Lower	19	38
Inclusion of adequate level of language skills	High	5	10
	Moderately	4	8
	Lower	41	82
Participation of the students	High	9	18
	Moderately	34	68
	Lower	7	14
Providing new information	High	12	24
	Moderately	28	56
	Lower	10	20
Easy implementation	High	18	36
	Moderately	26	52
	Lower	6	12
Compliance with the students' levels	High	15	30
	Moderately	12	24
	Lower	23	46

used seem to be visually rich and varied with the use of appropriate visual materials that have a high level of sufficiency. However, most of the worksheets have different font types and sizes, the font sizes selected in the worksheets are either larger or smaller than normal and most of the worksheets don't include any video or audio recordings. Therefore, the worksheets developed by Pre-Service Turkish Teachers are considered to be poor in terms of audio visual aspects.

The findings related to content qualification of the worksheets developed by Pre-Service Turkish Teachers are given in Table 3. In Table 3, there are eight categories about content qualification of the worksheets developed by pre-service Turkish teachers. In the worksheets, the items regarding appropriate length of the pages (f: 25), including different types of questions (f: 19), including appropriate questions (f: 22), participation of the students

(f: 34), providing new information (f: 28) and easy implementation (f: 26) are found to be moderately sufficient; while the items related to inclusion of adequate level of language skills (f: 41) and compliance with the student levels (f: 23) seem to be adequate in much lower levels. Considering the items related to inclusion of adequate level of language skills, there were reading and writing activities in general, whereas the reading and speaking activities were skipped over. With regard to the items compliance with the students' levels, more complex and high level worksheets were developed.

Findings related to the opinions of pre-service Turkish teachers

The opinions of pre-service Turkish teachers regarding

Table 4. The contribution of worksheets developed by pre-service Turkish teachers to themselves.

Contributions of developing worksheets	f	%	Opinions of pre-service Turkish teachers
Gaining the experience of preparing textbooks	15	30	Obviously, I think I spent a great effort to complete this task, found a chance to examples given to us, gained experience to teach Turkish to foreigners in the future semesters and I also believe that I gained the ability to prepare a small scale textbook in teaching Turkish to foreigners (P1)
The chance of implementing theoretical	19	38	It was very good to implement the information we have learnt theoretically in a new field while writing a new book (P3)
Awareness in teaching Turkish language	4	8	We have learned how to think systematically, be organized and be aware of others' learning level (P23)
Being guided in teaching Turkish language	3	6	This task is a guide for me if I choose to study in this area in the future (P13)
Developing computer use skills	3	6	I have studied the book of Turkish language teaching to foreigners. I improved my Word (Office Program) using skills. I get an idea about how I teach what I want to teach (P20)
Gaining higher level of thinking skills	2	4	It contributed to creative thinking but took a lot of time (P24)
Learning the sources that can be used in teaching turkish language	3	6	We have learned the sources that we can use while doing our assignment. We have reviewed the book used in education (P39)
Developing basic language skills	1	2	I developed by skills in relation to computer and four basic skills (P42).
Total	50	100	-

contribution of worksheets developed by them to themselves are given in Table 4. In Table 4, the opinions of teacher candidates regarding the contributions of these worksheets to themselves are given. Considering the information given in Table 4, pre-service Turkish teachers have 8 different views regarding contributions of the worksheets developed by them. These views are gaining the experience of preparing textbooks (f: 15), the chance of implementing theoretical information (f: 19), awareness in teaching Turkish language (f: 4), being guided in teaching Turkish language (f: 3), developing computer use skills (f: 3), gaining higher level of thinking skills (f: 2), learning the sources that can be used in teaching Turkish language (f: 3) and developing basic language skills (f: 1). According to these views, the worksheets developed by the teacher candidates allowed them to put what they learn into practice and provided them the experience of preparing textbooks. Accordingly, pre-service Turkish teachers have gained some practical skills that are important in the field of teaching Turkish to foreigners. The views of pre-service Turkish teachers in regard to difficulties they faced while developing the worksheets are presented in Table 5.

In Table 5, the views of pre-service Turkish teachers with regard to difficulties they have faced while developing the worksheets are presented. Considering the views given in Table 5, teacher candidates have 11 different views regarding the difficulties they faced while developing the worksheets. These views are creating different and unique work (f: 21), developing worksheets appropriate to the students' levels (for 13), developing fun worksheets (f: 1), organizing activities for the higher level thinking skills (f 1), skill of computer use (f: 5), lack of access to adequate sources (for 4), spending too much time (f: 3), inability to decide what to prepare (f: 4), preparing different questions (f: 1), selecting sample sentences (f: 1) and appropriate photo selection (f: 2). According to the views of teacher candidates, they have mostly experienced difficulties to develop different and unique worksheets and developing worksheets that are appropriate for the language level, respectively. Pre-service Turkish teachers stated that they spent a lot of time on this assignment which is based on research and hard-working skills and these issues challenged them the most. The views of pre-service Turkish teachers with regard to outstanding features of the worksheets are

Table 5. Difficulties encountered while developing the worksheets.

Difficulties encountered	f	%	Opinions of pre-service teacher
Creating different and unique work	21	37,5	We wanted to prepare different activities from the activities given in the book; however, we have difficulties since we were not very experienced in developing new activities (P23).
Developing worksheets appropriate to the students' levels	13	23,2	I was very hesitant. It was very hard for me to prepare the appropriate level (P18).
Developing fun worksheets	1	1,7	The text we choose should be fun, instructive and had to be appropriate to the event. This was very hard for me (P2).
Organizing activities for the higher level thinking skills	1	1,7	I have spent great effort to create a unique work that can develop high-order thinking skills This was the challenging part of the task (P4).
Skill of computer use	5	8,9	I have difficulties about the use of computer and organizing the assignment (P48).
Lack of access to adequate sources	4	7,1	It was difficult to find sources (P11).
Spending too much time	3	5,3	It took a lot of time to review many sources (P13).
Inability to decide what to prepare	4	7,1	It was challenging to decide what kind of activity I was going to develop and decide which activity would be more efficient (P46).
Preparing different questions	1	1,7	It was so hard especially to prepare questions after the text. It was also challenging to prepare a video. I spent almost 1 week to find the video (P30).
Selecting sample sentences	1	1,7	It was hard to create sample sentences (P34).
Appropriate photo selection	2	3,5	It was difficult to match the subjects with pictures (P44).
Total	56	100	-

presented in Table 6.

In Table 6, the views of pre-service Turkish teachers with regard to outstanding features of the worksheets developed by them are presented. Considering the views given in Table 6, teacher candidates have 11 different views regarding the outstanding features of the worksheets developed by them. These views are having fun while learning (f: 5), developing worksheets appropriate to the level of students (f: 7) and towards higher order thinking skills (f: 2), reflecting Turkish culture (f: 4), including different and unique activities (f: 6), developing worksheets in accordance with achievements of European Language Portfolio (f: 1) and towards practical learning (f: 10), providing Turkish language education in the texts (f: 3), teaching with examples (f: 2), using effective visuals (f: 3) and aiming proper education of language skills (f: 3). Accordingly, the most important feature of the worksheets developed by pre-service Turkish teachers is developing towards practical learning.

It can be stated that it was aimed to develop practical learning skills of the students with these worksheets.

CONCLUSION

The study aimed at evaluating the pre-service Turkish teachers' skills and opinions regarding preparation of worksheets to teach Turkish language to foreigners. These worksheets were mostly developed in relation to daily life and cultural elements. Thus, it was pre-determined that these worksheets should include daily life activities and cultural elements aimed to facilitate the daily lives of those learning Turkish language. In a study conducted by Şaşmaz and Ormanlı (2012), it was reported that the worksheets developed by classroom teacher candidates are effective on daily lives. Demircioğlu et al. (2014) stated that including examples from daily lives in the worksheets facilitates the learning

Table 6. The outstanding feature of the worksheets developed.

The outstanding feature	f	%	Views of the pre-service teacher
Having fun while learning	5	10,8	The most important feature of the worksheets is the student will have fun while learning. A lot of information is combined with activities within the scope of games (P1)
Developing worksheets appropriate to the level of students	7	15,2	The most important feature of these worksheets is that they don't appeal to everyone, but a certain group indicated (P15)
Towards higher order thinking skills	2	4,3	High-level cognitive skills such as creative thinking and problem solving (P14)
Reflecting Turkish culture	4	8,6	I have tried to reflect Turkish culture as much as possible with the materials I have prepared (P7)
Including different and unique activities	6	13	Unique events, appropriate level of activities, and lots of different activities (P10)
Developing worksheets in accordance with achievements of European language portfolio	1	2,1	Developing towards achievements of the European Language Portfolio (P10)
Towards practical learning	10	21,7	I think it would be useful for a foreigner to practice in learning Turkish language (P18)
Providing Turkish language education in the texts	3	6,5	Aiming to teach Turkish language by having reading practices on a text (P25)
Teaching with examples	2	4,3	It was already aimed to have worksheets towards teaching Turkish to foreigners with examples (P28)
Using effective visuals	3	6,5	The most important feature of the worksheets I prepared is presenting information with activities, applications and visuals (P40)
Aiming proper education of language skills	3	6,5	I have included all skills and they seem sufficient since I have prepared separate texts for each topic (P45)
Total	46	100	-

process of the students.

Considering the formal qualification of the worksheets developed, the appropriateness of expressions, clarity and understandability of the instructions, appropriateness of the page designs are found to be moderately sufficient; while the use of appropriate visuals is found to be highly sufficient and font/font size, and compliance of the audio-visual elements are found to be adequate in much lower levels. Worksheets developed by pre-service Turkish teachers have moderate level of sufficiency in terms of formal qualifications, and the use of audio visual elements said to be insufficient. Considering the content competence of the worksheets, the items regarding appropriate length of the pages, including different types of questions, including appropriate questions, participation

of the students, providing new information and easy implementation are found to be moderately sufficient; while the items related to inclusion of adequate level of language skills and compliance with the students' levels seem to be modestly adequate.

Therefore, it can be said that the worksheets developed by pre-service Turkish teachers have moderate level of sufficiency in terms of content competence, and they experienced difficulties while creating worksheets appropriate to the level of students. Although there are some studies such as Göçer (2012), Tan (2008), Çiftlik (2011), Tarım and Akdeniz (2007), Özdemir (2006) and Dede (2010) with regard to the use of worksheets in the literature, a case study aiming to develop worksheets is conducted by only Şaşmaz and Ormancı (2012).

According to their study, the worksheets developed by classroom teacher candidates for Science and Technology course are moderately sufficient.

Considering the opinions of teacher candidates regarding contribution of these worksheets to themselves, it was stated that these worksheets gave the chance of implementing theoretical knowledge they have acquired. According to this data, it can be said that pre-service Turkish teachers gained some practical skills in the field of teaching Turkish language to foreigners. In the study of Şaşmaz and Ormancı (2012), it was stated that these practices help teacher candidates learn how to develop worksheets and gain the ability to develop such works.

Considering the views of pre-service Turkish teachers in regard with difficulties they have faced while developing the worksheets, they have experienced difficulties to develop different and unique worksheets at most. Pre-service Turkish teachers may think that they spend too much time to acquire these skills that can be improved based on research and these issues were the most challenging ones for them. Bozdoğan (2007) suggests that since teachers know their students, they create the most appropriate worksheets for their students.

Considering the views of pre-service Turkish teachers with regard to outstanding features of the worksheets developed by them, it can be said that they prepared these worksheets towards practical learning. It can be stated that it was aimed at developing practical learning skills of the students with these worksheets. Several teacher candidates stated that they have tried to develop fun and interesting worksheets. According to the study of Dede (2010), the visuals in the worksheets help in drawing attention of students and motivating them. Demircioğlu et al. (2014) stated that worksheets attract the attention of students.

Gaining the ability to create and use in other courses may contribute to pre-service Turkish teachers in terms of learning by doing. Teacher candidates may be informed about the uses of worksheets in order to increase the prevalence of use of worksheets in the learning environments.

Conflict of Interests

The author has not declared any conflicts of interest.

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